

HOOSIER FOLKLORE BULLETIN

Edited by
Herbert Halpert

Contents

Tales and Legends Collected by Jeffersonville Students	
Margaret Sweeney . . .	39
I. Tales	39
II. Legends	44
The Folksinger Speakers (Part 2)	Herbert Halpert . 48
Robin Tamson's Smiddy	Cecilia Hennel Hendricks . .55

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TALES AND LEGENDS COLLECTED BY JEFFERSONVILLE STUDENTS

The first samples of folklore which I used to interest my high school students in Jeffersonville, Indiana, came from Vincennes.

It was in the fall of 1938 that I met Miss Anna C. O'Flynn, a former teacher in the old Frenchtown school, who preserved the traditions of old Vincennes by bringing great storytellers together at the annual King Ball Festival held each year during the Christmas holidays. In her younger days Miss O'Flynn caught the French dialect from living among the old French families and she could tell the stories as she remembered Felix Boucher's recounting his tales to his audience in the old days of Vincennes. The folktale "The Good Pumpkin, Lou Garou," was one of his favorites. He was not the only one who told tall tales.

I could do very little with the tale in the French dialect as it was originally told to me. However, Mrs. Wanda Reel had heard the story many times so she wrote it down for me in English. In order that my high school students might get the idea of what folktales were like, I gave them the tale in this form.

I. TALES

1. The Good Pumpkin

Many years ago, in old Vincennes, every householder had a garden which was the pride and joy of his heart. Among these early settlers, was one Jacques Cabaissco, who, with great care and patience, raised a pumpkin of fabulous size.

Many of the French settlers had their gardens on the bottom side of the Ouabache River, which they had to cross when they worked in them. Jacques was so zealous in the cultivation of his garden that he made many more trips than his neighbors, and watched over it the year round.

One cold night in late fall, when the wind and sleet blew relentlessly across the river, Jacques started home but never reached his cabin. The river had frozen over and everyone believed Jacques to have perished from the cold.

The winter was long and hard, and the river remained solid for three months. Christmas and New Year were sad times for Madame Cabaissco and her family. Many believed the season to have been bewitched. When February came, the sun was so warm the trees began to leaf out and the ice melted in the river.

One day, as one of the settlers stood on the bank, he saw a great golden cup in the middle of the Ouabache. Out of the cup emerged Jacques Cabaissco riding his well-known horse. Up the bank, into his native village, he rode in golden splendor, for both horse and rider were covered with gold. Laughing gaily, he threw pieces of gold into the astonished crowd, and

Charlie Page, an old neighbor, caught one of them. In terror, Page implored Jacques to tell his story.

"It was just ninety-one days ago," Jacques began, "that my good pumpkin saved me. I was down on the farm on the other side of the river and started back home. I believed the ice was thick enough to bear the weight of my horse and me, but when we tried it, down, down we went to the bottom of the icy river. There a strange thing happened. My good pumpkin miraculously enclosed us and grew up around us, shutting us in entirely. I don't know how long we remained in the pumpkin house. The horse, first, began to eat the pumpkin, then, being very hungry, I tasted of it myself, and continued to feed upon it I know not how long. Strangely enough, the taste was sometimes like apples; then, it was like grapes; then, like meat; and again, like what it was, a fine golden pumpkin. I ate, I slept, I worried, and finally thought surely I must die. But I lived, and when the ice was gone, my horse and I came out of the pumpkin as you witnessed.

"Notwithstanding the fact that the inside of the pumpkin was edible, the outside had changed to pure gold. The seeds, too, had turned to gold, and I filled my pockets with the strange treasure."

"Yes," interposed Charlie Page, "I caught one gold piece you threw as you came to land. Come, we will pull in your good pumpkin for you."

Everybody in Vincennes was willing to lend a horse for the marvelous work and it required fifty of them to perform the pleasant task. Fearful spectators advised against it, claiming to have been warned by the wind. "Do not pull the pumpkin to land", but the workers gave no heed. The good pumpkin was landed, but when its side touched the shore, it was immediately changed into a mere rotten pumpkin which rose into a hill as big as a barn.

Then Jacques grew golden pumpkins and many varieties of vegetables. He was kind to all the growing things, and they well repaid him for his patient and tender care.

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A class of my high school juniors studying American literature began collecting these tales in Jeffersonville from their grandparents, aged friends and neighbors, stories to parallel the one given.

Among those brought in was one entitled "The Great Cabbage", which the student recognized clearly as related to the one I had presented. Another variant of this form of the story was next brought by one of my students who came to us from Scottsburg, Indiana, where she had heard it from her uncle. With great delight one of the girls found this story in her French text. Another brought in a story, "The Large Turnip", similar to that of the pumpkin, but in a different garb. Thus the students noted how widely scattered the sources of such tales are.

2. The Large Turnip

Contributed by Dorothy Milholland, who secured it from Mrs. Roberta Burge, 75, who lives on State Highway 31, near Jeffersonville.

A Mr. Finnegan had a turnip, and it grew and grew behind the barn. It grew so very large, that when he wanted to cook it he had to build a kettle. Mr. Finnegan worked, worked and worked upon this kettle until one day it was complete. When Mr. Finnegan went to get the turnip so very, very large, he took the horses three. He wrapped a chain around it; then the horses pulled, pulled, and pulled until at last it came free. Mr. Finnegan and his family peeled, peeled, and peeled upon it until at last the work was done. In order to get it in the pot he sawed, sawed, and sawed until at last he had it in bits. Then into the kettle he put it. He cooked, cooked, and cooked it. Then he and his children seven, ate, ate, and ate upon it from January to May and yet it wasn't gone.

(From the use of repetition, this is obviously a story told for the amusement of children. — The Editor.)

3A. The Great Cabbage

Contributed by David Higdon, who secured it from his grandmother, Mrs. M.C. Higdon, 81, of Jeffersonville. He says of it: "The story of the large cabbage was told to my grandmother, as two men who were trying to tell the tallest tale. It was probably handed down from one generation to another, until it was finally passed on to me. This story had its origin probably in Germany five generations ago, in the days of my great-great-grandparents. My uncle also told of hearing this tall story a long time ago. He told it the same as my grandmother with the exception of the railroad, but she remembered it after he had said something about it."

During my childhood days, I heard tell of a man who raised the largest cabbage ever. They say it was so big it reached across a ten-acre field and that one leaf covered a whole regiment of soldiers--and that wasn't all. Cattle and stock from all round about came and sheltered under the leaves of the cabbage and ate of its sweet juicy leaves.

To match this tale, I can remember hearing a neighbor talk about the large kettle which must be made to cook the cabbage in. Thousands of men worked on this kettle for months before it was built. They say a railroad ran through it so that the men could get their pay on pay day. When it was quitting time, the men dropped their tools in the kettle and when they came back in the morning the tools were just hitting the bottom.

3B. The Cabbage

Contributed by Thelma Feller, who secured it from her uncle, Eugene Everitt, 73, of Scottsburg.

An old man told the following joke which took the prize because it was the biggest tale:

"A farmer put out an acre of cabbage plants, and they all died except one, but it was so large that it weighed more than all the cabbages that the acre of ground could have produced."

Just as the old man was going to receive his prize, a stranger who had been standing in the crowd said that he would like to tell the group not a tale but a really-to-goodness experience that he had in a small village through which he had passed. Then he began:

"A group of men--well to be exact, twelve--were working on a kettle that was going to be so large that whenever some of the workmen and he were standing on one side of it, they could not hear the others who were working on the other side."

"What in the world are they going to do with such a large kettle?" asked the old man.

"Cook that cabbage that you just told us about," replied the stranger.

3C. An Old Marseillaise Story

The folktale, "The Large Cabbage", translated from the French by Jean Hunter, from the version in her textbook.

"I have seen," said he, "a cabbage larger than a house."

"And I," said the other, "a pot as large as a church."

"Why, a pot so large?"

"To hold your cabbage!"

(For another text and references to the story of the great cabbage and the great kettle, see this Bulletin, I, 50-51--The Editor.)

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I got two other tall stories from another resident of Vincennes, but none of my students brought in any variants of them. I think they are worth giving here.

4. Giant Turkey

Secured by the writer from Mrs. Josephine Caney, 83, a native of Vincennes. Mrs. Caney's maiden name was Josephine Theriaque. An ancestor of hers came from France to Montreal, Canada, and thence to Vincennes.

Joe Bedan killed a turkey which was so big he could hardly carry him, but, nevertheless, he threw him over his shoulder and as his bleeding neck hung down so long the blood made tracks in the snow on the Fourth of July.

5. Deer Plants Fast-Growing Tree

Secured by the writer from Mrs. Josephine Caney of Vincennes.

Cock Bushie said one day he was sitting on his porch eating peaches when he heard a noise; and as he looked up there stood a deer staring at him. He reached for a missile to throw at the creature and picked a peach which he hurled. The deer caught the fruit, ate it, and stamped the stone into the ground and ran away. The next morning Cock saw a peach tree growing where the deer had planted the seed.

(The late Mrs. Caney was Alan Lomax's chief informant when he collected French folksongs at Vincennes in 1938. Her death is a great loss to all interested in preserving the many strains of Indiana folklore.--The Editor.)

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I then encouraged them to find other folktales--nursery tales or fairy tales, and this is what I got from Maurice Miller whose grandfather came from Galway County, Ireland. I also got two others: one from my own family tradition, and one Negro story.

6. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday

Contributed by Maurice Miller, who secured it from his grandfather, Patrick Bane, 76, who came from Galway, Ireland.

On November 1st, the fairies moved to new quarters in the village of Oran More in the county of Galway. It happened this way. While passing a hill on this November night a boy with a hump on his back, heard voices singing.--

"Saturday, Sunday, Monday," was the fairy song. So the boy sang too, but he sang, "Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday."

He heard a voice saying, "Who is improving on my song?" So he took the boy to fairyland.

"I see, lad, you have a hump on your back. I will take it off," said the fairy as he sent the boy back home. And his folks didn't know him he looked so fine.

It happened that in this same village there lived a rich family that had a boy with a hump on his back. When he heard about the fairy song, he thought he would go to the fairies. So the following November night he was passing a very long hill when he heard the fairies singing "Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday". So he started to sing and added 'Wednesday.' Then he heard a voice say, "Who is spoiling my song?" So he took the boy in. The King Fairy said, "You have a hump on your back so I will put another hump for spoiling my song."

This happened during November 1880 in Galway County, Ireland.

(Mr. Paul G. Brewster gives a variant of this tale and very full references in "Folk-Tales from Indiana and Missouri" Folk-Lore, L (1939) 302-3. Add: Bealopdeas I, 64-65; II, 16-17, and 23-24 for bibliography; III, 211; VII 62 and 77--The Editor.)

7. Catching Death

Contributed by David Higdon who secured this tale from a man who got it from my own grandmother, Sweeney. My grandmother came from County Clare, Ireland, and she died long before I was born. Charley Fires' mother had worked for her and Charley had heard this tale and remembered it after more than sixty years. Charley is 67, and a native of Jeffersonville.

Once upon a time there was an old man who liked his liquor too well. One night when he was all by himself, and he had been drinking as usual, he heard a knock on the door.

"Who's there?" the drunkard asked.

"Death," called the voice.

"You can't come in my house," the old man replied.

"I will come in sir, if I have to come through the keyhole," Death warned.

"Come along then, if you insist," answered the drinker.

In came Death through the keyhole but the old man cried, "Ha, you can't get me!" as he held the bottle to the keyhole. "Now take that!" as he put the cork in the bottle.

(This is a form of Type 332. See my notes in R. Chase, The Jack Tales (Cambridge, 1943); p. 200 -- Th. Editor.)

8. Pen Poppin Jenny

Contributed by Margie McBride, who secured it from Emma Tyler, colored of Jeffersonville.

Once there was an old bear and a rabbit, and the bear carried the rabbit to his house. So when they got to the door the old bear said, "Pen Poppin Jenny." The door flew open.

Now the old bear had a big pot of beans, and he wouldn't give the rabbit any. Finally they left, and the rabbit slipped back and he ate the bear's beans. Then he forgot how to get out and he went to the door and said, "Jenny-flipper", but the door wouldn't open. By that time the old bear came back and he said, "Pen Poppin Jenny" and the door opened to let him in.

The rabbit ran out crying. "That's it," and the old bear couldn't catch him.

(The editor has seen a variant of this tale but is unable to give the reference.)

My students were also able to get some very interesting local stories mostly about lost mines and treasure.

II. LEGENDS

9. Indian Treasure Cave

Contributed by Martha Rush, who writes: "This legend was told to my brother by John Work Long, the great-grandson of John Work."

Everyone around here has probably heard of Tunnel Mill which is located

four miles northeast of Charlestown. This name originated from a creek known as Fourteen Mile Creek which runs a tunnel through two hundred and fifty yards of solid rock from the side of a hill to the wheel of a mill and furnishes power to run it. This mill was built by a pioneer, John Work whose descendants still live in Charlestown, and fifty Shawnee Indians. They worked for years tunneling through the hill by the use of gun-powder.

John Work was friendly with the Indians, curing the sick and teaching them many useful things. Then came a time when they again became hostile, but before this they told John to get three bags and meet them in back of his home. He did as instructed. They blindfolded him, and for three days and nights led him through the woods and across creeks until finally they stopped, lifted a rock which concealed the entrance to a cave, and entered. When they had descended quite a distance, they removed the blindfold from his eyes and said, "Great Paleface, you have been kind to our people, but now the time has come when we must fight the white men to keep our hunting ground. Fill the sacks with silver and gold."

John Work, who had been blindfolded and whose eyes were now becoming accustomed to the dark cave, looked in amazement. Great stacks of gold and silver met his gaze. He was spell-bound. Then an Indian spoke, "When you have filled the sacks, and we have returned you home safely we are no longer friends; our debt to you is paid." After filling the sacks he was again blindfolded and taken home. It is said that the people of Charlestown still are looking for the riches hidden in Tunnel Mill.

(Compare this legend with the variant given in No. 11.)

10. Tunnel Mill and Nine-Penny Hill

Contributed by Juanita Rush, who secured it from Dr. C. F. Pangburn, 74, of Charlestown, Indiana.

On Fourteen Mile Creek is a mill called Tunnel Mill. It was built over 100 years ago. There was a cliff there and the rock was blasted through to make a tunnel for the water to run through to turn the mill. The blasting powder was made there. It took about one year to make the mill and tunnel. When it was first made, the tunnel was big enough for a man to ride through on a horse. It was owned by a man named John Work. About the time the mill was completed the question arose how to get up and down the hills with the grain, so it was decided that each customer who came to the mill should donate nine pence to construct a hill that could be traveled, and each family in the surrounding territory would donate their labor and nine pence. So the hill was named Nine-Penny Hill. At the bottom of the hill is a branch by the same name, Nine-Penny Branch. This hill and tunnel are there.

11. The Silver Mine

Contributed by Paul Perkins, who secured it from James Heetch, 55, of Charlestown, Indiana.

Jed Sparks lived three miles outside of Charlestown where Tunnel Mill Scout Camp is now located. He lived with his wife and one child, and secured his living by farming and trading with the Indians. One winter a grippe epidemic broke out among the Indians. Jed was quite well known for his herbs so the Indians called on him to help cure the epidemic. The chief's young

son was very ill and was sinking fast; the chief had already lost his squaw. More than one-half of the whole tribe was sick with the grippe. Jed mixed his herbs and tended each Indian and succeeded in curing the chief's son and most of the Indians.

As a reward for his helping them, they said they would give him all the silver he could carry on one mule. They blindfolded him in order that he might not see where the mine was located. They led him to the mine and removed the blindfold. According to the story, the entire mine was filled high with silver ornaments and silver pieces of all ages; even the walls glittered with silver. Jed was allowed to load his mule and carry as much as he could. The blindfold was then replaced and they started back.

It so happened that one of the silver bags had a small hole in the bottom and as Jed would walk along, the silver would fall out, piece by piece. When they reached Jed's house again one of the Indians discovered the leak. They at once suspected Jed of doing this deliberately. Because he had helped them, they did not kill him, but instead took back all of the silver they had given him. It is said that Jed would go out for weeks at a time looking for the silver mine, but would always return home empty handed. According to legend the mine is supposed to still be there, in Tunnel Mill.

(It is interesting to compare this legend with its variant, No.9.)

12. The Treasure Seeker

Contributed by Bonnie Jean Kannapel, who secured it from George Rickard, about 65 years old, of Jeffersonville. She writes: "This story was told to Mr. Rickard by John Schwallier, who would be over one hundred years old were he living today."

The story goes that Indians often came down to Charlestown from the North and obtained gold and silver from some mines. They would not permit the white inhabitants of Charlestown to follow them or spy on them while they did the mining. Eventually those Indians from the North moved westward leaving the mines unknown to the white men. The white men have searched diligently for them, but to this day they have not been located.

This is the termination of Mr. Schwallier's story, but some years ago Mr. Rickard had an experience that had some bearing on it:

Several years ago a Shawnee Indian, named Chief Yellow Hammer, came to Mr. Rickard. This Indian was from Oklahoma. He had heard of the gold and silver mines and had come here to do some prospecting. When he asked Mr. Rickard for information, he was unable to give any, but he offered his assistance in the search for the mines. He said he would drive the Indian to Charlestown and they would look the country over. The Indian said he had intended to begin his search the following day and would come for Mr. Rickard then. That day was the first and last time Chief Yellow Hammer was seen by Mr. Rickard.

13. The Tale Of A Silver Mine

Contributed by Paul Stevenson, who secured it from W. W. VanMeter, 76, of R. R. #1, Jeffersonville.

Many years ago, supposedly about 1895, an Indian came to Utica from a

reservation in western Montana. With him he had a parchment, and on it there was a map and location of a great silver mine, along the great river which flows from the east. The Indian told that he had spent the last fifteen years of his life, hunting a place along the great Ohio River which would fit the description of the map on the parchment, and that Utica was the only place which fit, and it fit perfectly. With pick and shovel he started digging strongly in and around Utica, which aroused the people's attention, and everyone thought the Indian was crazy.

He kept up this hard prospecting day after day in spite of what people said about him. Finally one day, about fourteen months after he had started, he came wearily plodding into town with a large piece of silver ore, and said he had found the silver mine. From there he went up to what was then, and still is, the lime kiln of Utica. Anyone who has seen a lime kiln in use knows how white hot the coals stay in the bottom. The old Indian put his silver ore in an iron bucket and let it down into the white hot coals. Silver, pure silver came pouring out of the crevices of the ore. The old Indian became so excited in the effort of retrieving the silver that he fell into the smouldering coals.

With him went the parchment and the knowledge of the location of the silver mine. Today, it is still believed by the older generation of Utica, that there is a vast fortune in silver within the radius of three miles of Utica, but nobody has ever found it.

(An almost literal duplicate of this and the following legend was published in Indiana University's Folio, VI (March, 1941) 41-2, by one of my students who was a former pupil of Miss Sweeney. The student failed to give the source of her material, and it seems likely that she obtained them from her fellow students. -- The Editor.)

14. Battle Creek

Contributed by Otho Van Pelt, who secured it from Mrs. May Van Pelt, of R. R. #1, Jeffersonville.

Once upon a time, when the Indians roamed the biggest part of Indiana, a terrible fight was fought between the white settlers and the redmen at a point now known as Battle Creek, three miles east of what is now Utica. There were forty-five whites and about a hundred Indians. The attack started about ten o'clock one June night. The whites were never fully aware of what happened because some were killed and scalped.

There was so much blood that it cut out a creek bed which is now known as Battle Creek. The battle was so brutal that the panthers and lions stopped their prowling and howled like a dog does when it witnesses death.

If you are ever at that spot some June night, when the moon is shining, the water has a reddish appearance, and if you listen hard enough you can hear the mournful howl of some far away dog. This is a story that has been told to me over and over by many old men, whose fathers and mothers told it to them.

(See note to preceding legend.)

15. How Silver Creek Was Named

Contributed by Frank Peel, who secured it from Clyde Mesmer, 79, of Howard Park.

A long time ago when Indians were thick in these parts, the white men came in and most of them wanted to find gold and silver. The Indian told the men of a large creek to the west that was plentiful with silver nuggets.

The men hunted and soon came upon the creek, and sure enough there was more silver than they had ever seen before. They were delighted, and loaded all the ore they could on their horses. After many weeks of hard traveling the men reached the coast, where they thought they could easily dispose of the large nuggets of pure silver. However, when they took the ore to an expert to sell it, they found it was a worthless ore that they had brought all the way to the coast to throw away. Even today one may walk along the banks of Silver Creek and find many nuggets such as these men found, and that is how Silver Creek got its name.

16. The Voice Of The Drowned

Contributed by Joe Knoll, who secured it from Mrs. A. J. Knoll, 38, of Jeffersonville, who learned it from her father-in-law.

When grandfather was a boy, all the farmers took their grain to the mill to be made into flour. The mill near Cunot, where grandfather lived, was operated by a huge wooden wheel. This wheel was turned by the mill-race, a channel of water which was diverted from the main stream.

One day in late autumn, a girl was standing by the mill-race watching the huge wheel. It was one of those real warm days that come just before winter. Perhaps it was because of this that the girl was singing.

In some way, she fell into the water to be pulled under by the wheel. Her body went into the mill-race and was never located.

When the creek is high with spring rains, water rushes through the race making strange sounds. If you listen hard, you can hear the girl's voice mixed with the gurgling and whining of the water.

Jeffersonville, Indiana

Margaret Sweeney

(Miss Sweeney's contribution to the Bulletin is a very welcome one. It demonstrates the richness of material available to Indiana teachers who get their students interested. It is wise to impress the students with the importance of writing down any folk-lore item as nearly as possible in the words of the person telling it. In this way we can avoid slightly stilted writing that many people think is correct English style. — The Editor.)

THE FOLKSINGER SPEAKS (Part 2)

Here is more "documentary stuff" from folksingers. These are interviews from a little known folksong area: the Ramapo Mountains in Rockland County, New York. Most of the singers live less than thirty miles from New York City and were located on expeditions made under the sponsorship of Columbia University and the American Council of Learned Societies.

I was trying to collect folksongs from the "Jackson Whites," an interesting mixed group who live in this area and in the bordering region of northeastern New Jersey. A much-travelled tourist highway runs through this section, and I found as a consequence that the Jackson Whites were extremely reticent and very suspicious of strangers--more so than any other English-speaking group with which I have worked in the United States or Western Canada. All the Jackson Whites whose confidence I gained urged me to record songs from Mart Montonyea--the best white singer in the region. I finally located Mart and recorded an interesting group of songs from him on several different occasions spread over three years. These records, and those made by other of the singers, are on deposit at Columbia University Archive of Primitive Music, and at the Archive of American Folksong, Library of Congress. Note especially the description of the folksinging contest.

Of the remaining informants, the next is a white resident of the same area, although many of his songs were learned in Western New York. Mr. Storm is an old, one-armed man, and quite hard of hearing; the latter explains the brevity of the second interview. The third informant is a guitar-playing, crippled handleader, originally from Sullivan County. The fourth and longest interview was taken on two separate occasions. The singer's musical history, that of a kind of wandering child minstrel is an extremely interesting one. His life story is typical of a whole group of folksingers. Worth special attention is the interruption by his little seven-year old daughter. She is well on the way to becoming a folksinger in her own right. A recording was made of her singing of the old ballad, "Two Schoolmates" (Child 49) which is the old ballad of the "Two Brothers."

IV. RAMAPC MOUNTAIN SINGER

Interview with Martin Montonyea, Sloatsburg, N. Y., August 2, 1939.

Born: Oakland, Passaic County, New Jersey. This August 29th I'll be eighty-three. Father: Isaac Montonyea. He was a coal collier. Mother: Betsy Ann Paddick.

That's my occupation--burn charcoal. I ain't worked at it a good while. Ever since I was big enough I've worked in charcoal. I've worked at it off and on ever since I was seven years old. When I got married, I went in business myself. I've went through a good damn big fortune in my time.

My mother had fourteen children...and tonight I ain't got a father, mother, sister, brother, uncle, or aunt in the world. Even me wife is gone. Just them two boys of mine--all the rest is dead. I'm like the strange cat in the garret; I'm left afoot and alone.

Interview With Mart Montonyea, Dec. 18, 1938

John Dipley, the saloon keeper, said to a feller, Dave Acker, "I'll bet you ten dollars Mart can sing more songs than you." Dave said he'd go him. I was there. It was proposed for the next Saturday night.

I think it was sixteen, seventeen songs I sung after he was all sung out. He sung the first song, I sung the next, and so on until he didn't know any more. We started about half past nine and sung until ten minutes to twelve. Then John closed up. John kept a record of how many it was, but

I've forgot how many. He (Dave) knowed a lot of them. The place was full. Jammed right full in there. Two-thirds of them were standing up. It's about sixty-one years ago.

Business in the saloon was rushing. I've often thought of that, that John done that just to get the crowd. He knowed that would draw a crowd. I had supper and all I wanted to eat and drink and I got the ten dollars.

It was all the old timers then, not the new songs like they got today. They'd rather hear them. There's more common sense in the majority of them. My mother was a great singer. I guess she could sing all the day and half the night.

(Were they true?) The biggest part of them.. "Springfield Mountain"--bet that's a true song. "Cross the Wild Moor"--that's another true one. When you hear them sung, it brings everything back. Many a time I've sung a song and heard someone say, "I've heard my mother sing that", or "I've heard my father sing that."

I was offered one time fifteen dollars for singing three songs. I didn't feel like it and wouldn't do it.

I can set and sing songs when I'm all alone by myself--seems to put me in mind of olden times. This world is just like a different world from what it used to be. The ways of the whole world are different. When I'm alone and set and sing, it's a comfort to me. Last night after you left, five or six songs popped into my head that I hadn't thought of in years. When they come to me, they come all at once. I like the old ones best but I have a choice in them: "Springfield Mountain"--that I've always liked. "Sweet Betsy from over the Main"--that's a good, sensible, true song. (How long have you liked them?) Long's I can remember. I just wish you could've heard my wife's sister sing when she was living. You'd a said she was the best singer you ever heard. (What makes a good singer?) A person with a good clear voice. Some people are born with no music in them.

People learned songs from hearing the one who proposed (composed) it. Hearin' someone else sing it. I'd hear a song sung a second time and I'd know it, that is, if I took an interest in it. Sometimes I'd ask them to sing it again, sometimes I'd hear it without askin! I'd know part of it the first time, and the second I'd know it. (Have you ever sung it back to the man?) Yep, I've done that. It'd be O.K., same as he had it. (Are any songs hard to sing?) O yes, many. "Sweet Betsy,"--you've got to raise your voice when you sing it to keep the air of it. Have to raise it so high. I always sing kind of low.

Learned songs from my whole family, from outsiders, from all creation. Four or five years old when I started to sing. I knowed songs when I was six years old. (Mart couldn't remember when he first sang for company.)

Years and years ago, we'd have lots of dances and parties at people's houses. After a dance would break up, first one would sing a song, then another. Learned a good many songs that way. Many a time I've come home from a day's work, eat supper, put on other clothes, and then go to a dance somewhere. Fiddle and accordian--I used to play at a dance.

V. RAMAPO MOUNTAIN SINGER

Interview with Sidney Storm, 75, Slatsburg, N.Y., Aug. 7, 1941.

They used to get me to go to dances to sing songs for 'em, but that's all gone now. Oh all around the country. There were dances every night in some house or other—private dances. Sometimes have to tie a handkerchief around a man's arm, make a girl out of him. Within eight or ten miles of here, around what they call Ringwood, Conklintown, Midvale (New Jersey).

(What kind of work did you do?) Farmin' a whole lot. I used to burn a whole lot of charcoal. I was a farmer's son. We'd take it—peddle through Patterson. Sometime Kaywoods would come after it.

(Jackson Whites) They didn't go to the white people's dances at all. The most of these Jackson Whites lived in Hillburn.

Mart Montonyea? Him and me was boys together. He was a good singer, Mart was. They called me a good singer—but no more. But Mart was an awful good singer. (Mrs. Storm: "My mother was a good singer.") Mr. Storm: So was my mother.

VI. SINGER FROM SULLIVAN COUNTY, NEW YORK

Interview with William Dickinson, "48 next July," Tuxedo, N. Y., Dec. 18, 1938.

The old neighbors years ago used to visit around each others' house. The farms were quite far apart. They'd assemble at different neighbors' houses and sing songs, pop corn, and bake apples for refreshments, and play dominos. Dominos was the chief game they play.

Everybody, young and old—different farmers would have a boy or girl that could play an instrument—organ, accordion, or violin. One fellow had a concertina. I never saw a banjo, nor a saxophone, nor a piano. Some people would like to have one woman sing it by herself. They'd most always have music—an accompaniment to it, except when goin' from neighbors' house on a straw ride.

(Mr. Dickinson picked up his guitar saying.) My voice don't amount to anything. (Why sing with a guitar?) Just like an orchestra back of a singer

Mose of these songs they sang up there was true. At least I think they were. This Johnny Collins, he was drowned too. I think that Collins boy was crossing the Neversink river near Grahamsville—either between Neversink and Claryville, or Neversink and Grahamsville. He was going for a doctor for one of the family, and I think his horse plunged in, or else the bridge went out when they was on it. There was a lot of Collins that lived up on Wildman Hill.

People liked about these songs those days that some one of the party knew the person that the song was made up about. It would be like a funeral in a town—like we talk about somebody that died and they felt sorry for the people. They would console the ones that knew this girl in that way when they sung the song; console them by talkin' or singin' about her.

VII. SINGER FROM ULSTER COUNTY, NEW YORK

Interview with John Harris, Ramapo, N. Y., Nov. 20, 1938.

Started to learn songs when I was about six, seven years old. Ed Davis was the man that learned them to me. I would travel around through Ulster County with him. He was no relation to me. I'd be home nights and ridin' with him days. We'd go to hotels and pick up a little money. After he sung a song or two, would pass the hat around, maybe get three, four dollars. I went around with him till I was about nine years old. My stepfather got tough promised me a lickin', so I left home at twelve o'clock at night. Never went back home till I was 21.

(How did you learn them?) By him a-singin' them over. I'd trace it right after. After I sung it over after him a couple of times, I learnt the song. He sung it over different times and I'd sing it over after him, imitate him right along just as he went. After a while got so I could sing 'em myself. We'd go together to hotels and sing 'em both the same time. Child bein' there made it better. I knowed three or four songs, could sing 'em pretty good. Sound better for the two of us bein' together--~~when~~ we'd double it, voice would be good deal better all the way through. I was the best kid singer in Ulster County at that time. At least I had that name. I guess it was in me to like songs no matter where I heard them. I love 'em yet, but I can't sing any more--have no wind.

He wouldn't sing 'em twice in the same day. He'd sing what we knew over in one place, then we'd go to the next one--do the same thing. It would be maybe three months sometimes longer before we'd go back.

They'd ask us back--made business better, more people would come in, more beer was sold. Hotel keeper would always put in quarter or half dollar. He'd be the one we go to first to start it. He'd always put in more than someone else.

I've known 'us to take nine dollars out of a place in an hour. He always claimed he fed the horse and owned the rig so he took the bigger share. Would give me couple of dollars, dollar and a half, enough to pay my board. I'd turn it over to my mother and step father. Finally, when I was completely barefoot, I'd get money for a pair of shoes, but not before. Her will was good enough but he didn't want me to have nothin'!

Learned all my songs from the same man when I was between six and seven years old--that's when I learned them. Kept practicin' always, wherever I'd go I'd always be hummin'. I'd be goin' to clubs--"free-and-easies"--they called them that because you could get whatever you wanted. I would be called there--maybe get a couple of dollars, or three or four dollars.

His daughter Lillian (aged 7) said: When I heard my daddy sing, I started to sing right after him. I'd heard him sing and try it after him. First time I didn't get it, second time I got it.

Mr. Harris: She could imitate me right straight through. I don't know how she can sing alone, but she can sing right after me. I like to sing songs anyway.

Mrs. Harris: (proudly) Whatever song she'll hear, she'll try and sing it.

Mr. Harris: I liked "The Sailor Boy" best. I liked the voice, the sound, best. I used to sing that more than anything else.

The oldest ones I knowed I always thought the best from a kid up; still do. Lot of these songs now, I can't get no voice. They don't put 'em out to sound good. May sound good to somebody else, but don't sound good to me.

"Sailor Boy," "Two Schoolmates" (Ohild 49) -- made from real life. "The Sailor Boy" was sung right when he had the rope around his neck. They must have wrote it (from his singin'). I don't know how else he could have got it. (How do you know they were true?) I was told, same as I'm tellin' you. Ed Davis told me. Like all kids would be I'd ask him how they was made, and he said "From real life." I didn't ask him how he knew.

(Were the songs true?) They was actually true "Sailor Boy"--I was outside of Kingston Jail when he was on the gallows, and I heard him sing the song through the window. I was about 10 years old. There was a bunch of us kids a-livin' around there. How young the man was when he learned the song? I don't know. He was a man of forty when he was hung. I learned the song from Ed Davis, but I'd heard it sung by the man that was hung.

(Who sang songs?) There was one time when you heard everybody, every kid knew. Never knowed songs from book. They was all true songs. The man that learned them to claimed he knew they was true. Pretty near all of the love songs, especially the old fashioned ones, were made right up just the same as they happened. Two little school mates was made up by the brother of the one who was killed. He made it up just as he was goin' along.

You heard them from the young folks. The old ones knew them all but they didn't sing so much. As soon as they learned them to the young ones, they didn't sing them so much. Of course if a crowd got together, they (old people) might join in.

(Why don't young people sing them?) I think because they ain't in style. That's the only thing I see they have against them. I'd like to remember what I forgot. I don't think the new pieces carry any air to them. The voice on it--seems as if you go along talkin' it off.

Interview With John Harris, Dec. 4, 1938.

I run away from my uncle's in Orange County and went to Scranton, Pennsylvania. Hoofed it night and day; sleep in barns. Scared to death too, I remember as well as yesterday. I didn't know what I was up to. Last place I stayed in the barn, in the morning he found me there. He tried to get where I come from. I told him I didn't know anything about where I come from or how long I'd been travellin'. I was afraid I'd have to go back, and I was afraid of my step-father as if he was the devil. Asked me what I could do. I said I could do anything, milk a cow, just as good as he could. Then I showed him. Then he asked what else I could do and I said I could plow, harrow, cultivate, only thing I couldn't do was harness the horses. I couldn't get the harness up, it was too heavy. He said I was just the boy he wanted.

All the singin' I did when I worked for him was right around home. I didn't go nowheres to sing or dance. Never was in a hotel from the time I left Ed Davis till after I was 21.

I left after I was 21, just to see my mother and brother and sister. It just happened to hit my mind to go back. Hayes Bowers had a rubber tired buggy, (\$35.00 at that time they were). He gave me that, and a silver mounted whip, robes, stable blankets and two lap blankets and five hundred one dollar silver pieces, and I started out. He wanted me to marry his daughter, I was too young; I didn't want to get married. I'd never done any travelling and I wanted to see more country.

Nobody knew me at home. I went into home as a peddler. Nobody knowed me. My half-sister kept eyin' me and eyin' me. Then she said, "He can't fool me any longer 'cause he's my brother." Then she come, grabbed me around the neck and begin to kiss me; also my mother.

They was very poor people. Seventy five, eighty cents a day was all my stepfather made. I had this \$500 in my pocket. Took mother to Gardner to store. Got her two barrels of flour, barrel of pork; told her to get what she wanted. She went out and got all kinds of groceries. Grocer brought them home for an extra dollar. Then took her to buy clothes. My stepfather was about half shot when I came back; and he and Bill Hess was in an argument. I started in to part them and both sailed into me. I ketch me step-father by the neck and his ass hit the hearth and broke it off--ashes, fire and everything came out. My mother grabbed a pail of water and put it out. Old man says, "You get out of here." I says, "I done it before and I'm going to do it now again and never come back." I sold my rig and gave my mother \$150.00. Then I never come back until they had planted her.

I went here and there, all over the country. Travel a ways, work a while. Use this money to live on. One thing I couldn't do, come back. Never had cheek enough. Travel five, six hundred miles and when my money was gettin' short, work a while. Travelin' didn't cost me much. I didn't spend more than five dollars when I was young on fare--always used freight.

I worked at any kind of farmin' work. And I've chopped a lot of wood in my days. You won't believe me but I've cut six cord a day, average, for week in and week out. Cut it and ranked it.

Jobs used to bring maybe seventy-five cents a day and board on a farm. Cuttin' wood make dollar, dollar'n a half day. Run mowin' machine. Cuttin' wood was really the best bet. Any place you got off the train it wouldn't be two hours but there'd be somebody askin' you to work. Lots of places they begged me to stay.

I'll bet it would take two men to do the work I'm doin' right now. 'Fore I went on, they had three men doin' the work I'm doin'. In the first place in the morning when I come in, I put six wheelbarrows of facing (sand, clay and sea coal all mixed together). That's 590 pounds each wheel barrow. Then I've got to mix eight batches (30 scoop-shovels of old sand in a batch, and shovelful and a half of clay, and a shovelful of seed coal). That all goes on the molders' floor. I've from six to eight wheelbarrows of hot sand to wheel down. I have four wheelbarrows of seed coal to grind every day. I've two load of seed coal to bring in a day. I got to go out and screen coarse sand in the afternoon and bring three wheelbarrows a day of that in. On the average about thirty pails of water a day. I get four dollars a day for eight hours, four days a week, and enough overtime to get forty-four hours. If there's a holiday in the week, maybe I'll get only thirty-six hours. It's really a dog's life. You can't do your forty-four hours in four days.

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(The first installment of this article appeared in the Bulletin, III,
29-35.)

ROBIN TAMSON'S SMIDDY

The following information about and the text of "Robin Tamson's Smiddy" was supplied by Mrs. Margaret Campbell Edwards of Bloomington.

Her interest in the ballad was aroused at a reunion of her family held in Illinois in 1922 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the coming of the family to America. Both sides of the family were Scottish, the grandfather and father from Wigtonshire, the mother from the next shire to the north, and the grandmother from Ayr, a member of the McAdam family to whom Burns addressed his poetic "Epistle to Mr. M'Adam of Craigengillan."

During the celebration there was a call for some Scottish ballads, and two men, one Mrs. Edward's Uncle Thomas L. McCredie of Ft. Atkinson, Wis., the other an old friend, Mr. Matthew Richmond, both born in Scotland, agreed to sing. At that time Mr. Richmond's own cousin was farming the place at Ayr on which Robert Burns turned up the daisy about which he wrote his well known poem.

Mrs. Edwards reports that the sight of the two white-haired old gentlemen, standing before green velvet curtains, singing with might and main ballads they had learned as children, helping each other out on words that the passage of half a century had made dim, stands out as the highlight of the occasion.

One of the ballads they sang was "Robin Tamson's Smiddy." Recently Mrs. Edwards asked her uncle to write the words for her, and the following version was set down in July, 1944, by Mr. McCredie, now 84 years old.

Robin Tamson's Smiddy

My mither mend't my auld breeks,
And wow but they were duddy,
And sent me tae get Molly shod
At Robin Tamson's smiddy.
The smiddy lies ayont the burn
That wimples thru the clachan
And the's ne'er a time that a gae by
But what they fa a-laughin'.

Chorus

Fall lal the do a di,
Fall the do a dady,
Fall lal the do a di,
Robin Tamson's smiddy.

Now Robin was a wealthy carle
 And had ae only dochter.
 He ne'er wad let her tak a man
 Tho many a one had soughter.
 But what think ye of my exployt?
 The time the man's a-shoeing,
 I slippet in besides the lass
 And briskly fell a-wooing.

Chorus

And aye she ee'd my aulde breeks
 The time that we were clacking.
 Says I, "Ne'er mind the aulde breeks,
 There's new anes for the making;
 And gin you come to oor toon end
 And tak the place of my mither,
 You'll get my breeks to keep in trim,
 Mysel', and a' thegither."

Chorus

Says she, "Young man, your offer's guid,
 I really think I'll tak it;
 So you just gang bring out the beast,
 We'll baith get on the back ot,
 For gin I wait my father's time
 I'll wait till I am fifty,
 But noo I marry in my prime
 And mak a wife sae thrifty."

Chorus

Robin was an angry man
 At the losing of his dochter,
 O'er a the kintra side he ran
 Baith far and near he sought her.
 And when he came to oor toon end
 And fan us baith thegither,
 Said I, "Auld man, I've got your bairn,
 And ye can tak my mither."

Chorus

Robin grinned and shook his pow,
 "Guid faith," quo he, "you're merry,
 But I'll juist tak you at your word,
 And end this hurry burry."
 So Robin and oor aulde wife
 Agreed tae creep thegither.
 Now I hae Robin Tamson's bairn
 And Robin has me mither.

Chorus

In checking on the ballad, Mrs. Edwards had some correspondence with another Scot friend, Mr. Nelson McLeod of Cannington, Ontario, who is well versed in Scottish literature and music, being himself an excellent performer on the bagpipes. Upon one occasion some years ago when he was in Scotland he watched the professional piper parading before the gates of Stirling Castle. After a bit Mr. McLeod asked if he might be allowed to skirl the pipes. With an amused air the piper handed over his instrument, but his eyes fairly popped from his head when Mr. McLeod skirled with flourishes an ancient Scottish air not known generally, but held in high esteem by professionals.

In regard to "Robin Tamson's Smiddy" Mr. McLeod wrote to Mrs. Edwards in September, 1944:

"Robin Tamson's Smiddy" brought back old times. I knew this when a boy and can still repeat it from memory....I think I learned it from Mrs. Davidson...in Woodville when I was a lad of 11 or 12. Her version of the chorus differed somewhat from yours, being as follows:

Fall de rall, de riddle all,
 Fal de rall de ri do
 Fal de rall, de riddle all,
 Oh Robin Tamson's Smiddy, O'.

Apparently the verses were the same in both versions.

Indiana University

Cecilia Hennel Hendricks

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Membership dues for 1945 should be mailed promptly to Mrs. Cecelia H. Hendricks, Treasurer, Hoosier Folklore Society, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Members are urged to try to secure new members for the Society. Only with an increase in the funds made available in this way can we hope to enlarge the size and scope of the Bulletin.

Give Memberships to interested friends as Christmas Gifts! Some missionary spirit and personal endeavor by all members will give gratifying returns in better Bulletins and more spirited meetings.